

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A suture anchor for insertion into a cylindrical bone hole to anchor a suture to bone, the suture anchor comprising:
a distal body portion defining a longitudinal axis, the distal body portion having a diameter sufficient to fit in said bone hole, being insertable into the bone hole and defining a radially outwardly projecting anchoring member operable to retain the suture anchor in the bone hole; and
a proximal body portion integrally formed with and extending longitudinally from the distal body portion, the proximal body portion having opposed gripping portions moveable transversely between an open position and a closed position, the gripping portions defining a transverse, suture receiving aperture between them for receiving ~~at least one a~~ transversely oriented section of at least one suture, the aperture being relatively larger and able to receive the suture, in two-way, free sliding relationship when the gripping portions are in the open position and the aperture being relatively smaller and able to grip the suture in gripping relationship so the suture is prevented from moving in any direction when the gripping portions are in the closed position, the proximal body portion being responsive to insertion into the bone hole to move the gripping portions from the open to the closed position as the suture anchor is pushed into the bone hole, wherein the proximal body portion has a maximum transverse dimension in the open position, the proximal body portion has a smaller maximum transverse position in the closed position, and the anchoring member has a maximum transverse dimension smaller than the maximum transverse dimension of the proximal body portion in the open position.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) The suture anchor of claim 1 wherein the proximal body portion includes at least one channel angling away extending proximally from the aperture to receive the suture in a recessed protected position.

7. (Previously Presented) The suture of claim 1 wherein the anchoring member comprises at least one annular ring transverse to the longitudinal axis of the distal body portion.

8. (Currently Amended) The suture anchor of claim 1, wherein the proximal body portion further comprises comprising a locking mechanism integrally formed with the proximal body portion operable to retain the proximal body portion in the locked closed position.

9. (Previously Presented) The suture anchor of claim 8 wherein the locking mechanism comprises a first portion defining a lock projection and a second portion defining a lock recess for receiving the lock projection, the first and second portions sliding adjacent one another between the open and closed positions, the lock projection positively engaging the lock recess in the closed position.

10. (Previously Presented) The suture anchor of claim 1 wherein the aperture is elongated longitudinally to receive at least two suture ends extending transversely and spaced longitudinally within the aperture.

11. (Previously Presented) The suture anchor of claim 1 wherein the aperture is elongated transversely to receive at least two suture ends extending transversely and spaced transversely in a direction orthogonal to the axis of the suture within the aperture.

12. (Previously Presented) The suture of claim 1 further comprising a suture wherein the suture has first and second ends, the first end being fixed

to the suture anchor and the second end being receivable by the aperture in the open position to form a sliding suture loop, the second end being gripped by the aperture in the closed position to form a fixed suture loop.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Currently Amended) A unitary suture anchor for securing a suture into a cylindrical bone tunnel without tying a knot comprising:

 a distal body portion comprising an anchor member operable to secure the suture anchor to the bone;

 a proximal body portion comprising a pair of elongated and relatively movable first body members, at least one of the first body members being hingedly connected to the distal body portion, the first body members being relatively movable between a suture receiving open position and a suture locking closed position, said proximal body portion having a generally elliptical cross-sectional shape when said elongated first body members are in the suture receiving position and a generally circular cross-sectional shape when said elongated first body members are in the suture locking position within the bone tunnel;

 a transverse suture receiving aperture interposed between the first body members, the aperture adapted to receive-at-least-one a transversely oriented section of at least one suture in two-way, free sliding relationship when the first body members are in the suture receiving open position, the aperture being deformed and gripping the suture when the first body members are in the suture locking closed position; and

 a locking mechanism comprising a transverse body member extending from each of the first body members, the transverse body members being in sliding contact from the open position to the closed position, the transverse

body members defining a male/female engagement mechanism in which a portion of one transverse body member snaps over a portion of the other transverse body member in positive engagement to lock the first body members in the suture locking position[[.]].

wherein a top surface portion of the transverse aperture enclosing a portion of the transverse aperture in the proximal direction is at least one gripping portion extending over and beyond the transverse aperture while the suture anchor is in the open position so the transversely oriented section of each suture is prevented from exiting the aperture longitudinally.

16-18 (Cancelled)

19. (Original) The suture anchor of claim 15 wherein the suture anchor comprises a bioabsorbable material.

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Currently Amended) The suture anchor of claim 15 wherein the proximal body portion includes at least one channel angling away extending proximally from the aperture to receive the suture in a recessed protected position.

22. (Withdrawn) A method for securing a suture to a body tissue, the method comprising:

providing a suture anchor having a distal body portion for securing the suture anchor in the body tissue, a proximal body portion defining an aperture able to receive the suture and being reduceable from a first aperture size to a second aperture size; inserting a portion of the suture through the aperture; and

inserting the suture anchor into the body tissue to simultaneously reduce the aperture and grip the suture.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 22 wherein the step of inserting the anchor into the body tissue comprises inserting the anchor into a hole formed in a bone and insertion of the suture anchor into the hole causes a portion of the proximal body to deform radially inwardly.

25. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 23 further comprising:
tensioning the suture while inserting the anchor.

26. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 22 further comprising:
engaging a locking mechanism to retain the aperture at its reduced size.

27. (New) The suture anchor of claim 6, wherein each channel extends from the transverse aperture and opens through the proximal body portion.

28. (New) The suture anchor of claim 27, further comprising a top surface portion of the transverse aperture enclosing a portion of the transverse aperture in the proximal direction, wherein the top surface portion is at least one gripping portion extending over and beyond the transverse aperture while the suture anchor is in the open position so the transversely oriented section of each suture is prevented from exiting the aperture longitudinally.

29. (New) The suture anchor of claim 1, further comprising a top surface portion of the transverse aperture enclosing a portion of the transverse aperture in the proximal direction, wherein the top surface portion is at least one gripping portion extending over and beyond the transverse aperture while the suture anchor is in the open position so the transversely oriented section of each suture is prevented from exiting the aperture longitudinally.

30. (New) The suture anchor of claim 29, further comprising at least one channel defined by a void in the portion of one gripping portion extending over and beyond the transverse aperture.

31. (New) The suture anchor of claim 21, wherein each channel extends from the aperture and opens through one of the transverse body members.